

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 12

February 7, 1996, 12:32 p.m.
Page S-1037 Temp. Record

FARM BILL/Farmer Owned Reserve Program

SUBJECT: Agricultural Market Transition Act of 1996 . . . S. 1541. Harkin amendment No. 3446 to the Craig (for Leahy/Lugar) substitute amendment No. 3184.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 35-61

SYNOPSIS: As introduced, S. 1541, the Agricultural Market Transition Act of 1996, will make sweeping changes to the Nation's farm policies. Farm programs will be reformed to allow farmers to plant what they want when they want, acreage reduction programs will be eliminated, and spending on farm programs will be capped so that subsidy payments will decline as part of a 7-year transition to full market-oriented farming.

The Craig (for Leahy/Lugar) substitute amendment would make numerous compromise changes (see vote No. 9).

The Harkin amendment would reinstate the Farmer-Owned Reserve Program, which will be eliminated by this bill. That program pays farmers 26.5 cents per bushel to store grain instead of selling it.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

In the 1970s, we heard a hue and cry across the country from farmers that the grain companies and processors had a stranglehold over the grain markets because farmers could not afford to store their grain and market it when they could get the best price. When they took in their harvests, and prices were low, they had to sell their crops in order to pay their bills. Therefore, Congress in a bipartisan effort passed the Farmer-Owned Reserve Program. This program benefits both farmers and consumers. It allows farmers to stockpile goods until prices improve, and it helps consumers by stabilizing food prices. Food prices do not drop dramatically when harvests come in, nor do they rise during the growing season, nor do they fly through the roof when there is a drought. By having adequate reserves to draw on in hard times, prices remain stable. Stabilizing food prices also helps ranchers by guaranteeing that they will not see any sharp increases in feed prices when a drought or a flood wipes out a year's crops. The Harkin amendment would have a 7-year cost of \$81 million. We personally think that spending \$81 million over 7 years to have stable food prices year round and

(See other side)

YEAS (35)			NAYS (61)			NOT VOTING (4)	
Republicans (2 or 4%)	Democrats (33 or 72%)		Republicans (48 or 96%)	Democrats (13 or 28%)		Republicans (3)	Democrats (1)
Grassley	Akaka	Harkin	Abraham	Inhofe	Biden	Domenici- ²	Bradley- ²
Pressler	Baucus	Heflin	Ashcroft	Jeffords	Dodd	Gramm- ²	
	Bingaman	Hollings	Bennett	Kassebaum	Graham	Hatfield- ²	
	Boxer	Inouye	Bond	Kempthorne	Kennedy		
	Breaux	Johnston	Brown	Kyl	Kerry		
	Bryan	Kerrey	Burns	Lott	Lautenberg		
	Bumpers	Kohl	Campbell	Lugar	Leahy		
	Byrd	Mikulski	Chafee	Mack	Levin		
	Conrad	Moseley-Braun	Coats	McCain	Lieberman		
	Daschle	Murray	Cochran	McConnell	Moynihan		
	Dorgan	Pell	Cohen	Murkowski	Nunn		
	Exon	Pryor	Coverdell	Nickles	Robb		
	Feingold	Reid	Craig	Roth	Sarbanes		
	Feinstein	Rockefeller	D'Amato	Santorum			
	Ford	Simon	DeWine	Shelby			
	Glenn	Wellstone	Dole	Simpson			
		Wyden	Faircloth	Smith			
			Frist	Snowe			
			Gorton	Specter			
			Grams	Stevens			
			Gregg	Thomas			
			Hatch	Thompson			
			Helms	Thurmond			
			Hutchison	Warner			

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

to help farmers is a bargain. If our colleagues agree they will join us in voting in favor of the Harkin amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

The Farmer-Owned Reserve Program passed as a bipartisan initiative, and after seeing how it has worked in practice Senators should join on a bipartisan basis to kill it. In the past few years, this reserve has been gradually depleted, and we should not make the mistake of allowing it to grow again. When the reserve was large it created a huge overhang on the market that made it impossible for farmers to read market signals when running their farms. The looming presence of millions of bushels of hoarded grain always left open the possibility that markets could swing wildly and capriciously. The markets in fact did move in wild fits and starts, making the gamble of farming riskier than it ever was before. The cost of continuing this subsidy that actually hurts farmers will be nearly \$100 million over the next 7 years. For taxpayers and farmers alike the Harkin amendment is a bad deal. Some of us speak from first-hand experience as farmers--we have been hurt by this reserve program, and we urge our colleagues to take this opportunity to get rid of it once and for all.